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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
WASHINGTON

June 17, 1965

The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

In response to your request for a report on actual progress made in this Department in attaining our goal of equal opportunity, I submit the enclosed report. In this report we describe Department actions and focus in detail on progress in the four agencies studied by the Civil Rights Commission.

Our report notes firm steps taken down the road to equality; but, in a poet's words, we "have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep."

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Orville L. Freeman

Enclosure

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PROGRESS REPORT ON ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

June 17, 1965

Department-Wide Actions

First, the Office of the Inspector General is now in the field conducting the first phase of a special three-phase civil rights audit. This initial review will aid in determining the extent of Department progress in correcting and preventing the recurrence of the adverse operating conditions cited in the Civil Rights Commission's report. I stand ready to act to correct those deficiencies brought to my attention in the Inspector General's reports.

Further, the Office of the Inspector General is giving priority to all complaints alleging discrimination. For example, of the twenty-one complaints of racial discrimination in consumer food programs received since January 1, 1965, twelve were substantiated and the discriminatory practices eliminated; in seven no discrimination was found; the remaining two complaints resulted from misunderstanding.

Second, as of April 1, 1965, a Department survey revealed there were discriminatory practices in 188 buildings housing Department offices. Lessors have now eliminated, or agreed to promptly eliminate, these discriminatory practices in 158 buildings. In five cases Department agencies will move to other quarters because the lessor has refused to desegregate facilities. Negotiations are continuing in the remaining 25 cases.

Third, the Citizens Advisory Committee on Civil Rights met and made several recommendations to meet the Department's problem of discrimination. Pursuant to one of the Committee's recommendations I have asked the Director of Personnel to explore the feasibility of apprenticeship programs as an alternative to competitive examinations for Department employment. Other recommendations are also being implemented.

Fourth, the Office of Personnel has completed the field audit phase of a Department-Wide review of Negro professional staff recruitment, assignment, training, and promotional opportunities. A report of their findings and recommendations will be in my hands by June 25.

Fifth, the Committee on Program Review and Evaluation is now examining agency program appraisal systems. Where these systems are inadequate to measure the extent of service to minority groups, the Committee will recommend change.

Sixth, the Economic Research Service has initiated research contacts with predominantly Negro colleges and universities. Currently it is taking part in a joint research effort with Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A full-time USDA agricultural economist will be placed at North Carolina A&T and Tennessee A&I with funds for supporting services.

Agency Actions

Some of these actions include:

ASCS -- 37 Negroes have been appointed to State Advisory Committees and 62 to Review Committee posts in southern States.

FHA -- Loans to Negroes for livestock, machinery and real estate improvement have risen from a total of 304 in the last six months of 1964 to a total of 1,344 in the first five months of 1965.

SCS -- Employment of Negroes increased from 144 on January 1, 1965, to 221 on April 30, 1965.

FES -- 19 non-White delegates attended the 1965 National 4-H Club Conference; bi-racial committees now judge 4-H Club records in 14 southern States.

Agency progress to date in eliminating discrimination is summarized against the findings of discrimination in the Civil Rights Commission's report "Equal Opportunity in Farm Programs."

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Finding 1

"Until 1964, Negroes had not, with rare exceptions, participated in nominations and elections under the supervision and jurisdiction of the Department for ASCS County Committees in the South. ASCS did not assume responsibility for the elimination of discrimination in these elections prior to the winter of 1964. In that year, of 37,000 com-

munity committee members in the South, only 75 Negroes were elected. There were no Negroes among the 5,000 county committeemen in 11 southern States."

There are now 80 Negro community committeemen in southern States elected locally by farmers for a period of one year (Arkansas 7, Kentucky 2, Louisiana 1, Mississippi 14, North Carolina 27, Oklahoma 3, South Carolina 17, Texas 7, and Virginia 2).

In the coming community elections which begin on July 1, 1965, county committees will place the names of Negro candidates on the ballot.

Finding 2

"Negroes are not employed in permanent Federal or county ASCS positions in the South; nor are they appointed to important temporary positions filled each year by county committees."

As of May 28, 1965, there are 3,254 Negroes employed in full-time and temporary jobs in county offices in southern States. These people are both office and field employees, a high percentage being compliance reporters. There will be a further increase in minority group employment since commitments for employment have been made consistent with compliance work underway for cotton, peanuts, tobacco, feed grains, etc. Although most of the employment is in the temporary category, this type of experience will be accepted as qualifying experience for permanent positions in ASCS State and county offices.

Where the Civil Rights Commission reported one full-time GS-3 clerk in ASCS State offices in the southern States in November 1964, there are, as of May 31, 1965, 39 Negro employees in ASCS State offices in these same southern States.

Finding 3

"No Negro has ever been appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to a State ASC Committee in the South."

The Secretary has appointed three Negroes to ASC State Committees. They are now serving in Arkansas, Maryland, and Mississippi.

To increase the participation of Negroes in policy-making decisions the Administrator appointed 39 Negroes to ASC State Advisory Committees in nine southern States. They will assist in assuring (1) equal opportunities in farm program administration at the State and county level, (2) equal access to information on ASCS program benefits and equal opportunity to participate in them, and (3) full participation in ASCS community and county elections, both as voters and as candidates.

The Administrator appointed 62 Negroes for regular one-year terms on Review Committees in southern States.

Finding 4

"No evaluation is conducted on a systematic basis to measure the impact of ASCS programs on white and Negro farms or the extent to which farmers of both races participate in these programs."

A system of record-keeping is now being established in county offices in southern States so that evaluations can be made of the extent to which Negroes participate in and benefit from ASCS programs as compared to whites. These data will be used as the foundation for surveys of individual producers to determine whether they have an equal opportunity with others to benefit from the farm programs. The evaluation and analysis will point out existing weaknesses and thereby provide guidelines for improving ASCS services.

Other Actions

When the Commission made its report there were 109 cases of discriminatory practices in ASCS office housing in southern States. As of June 1965 there are 20 cases. In these remaining cases negotiations are underway in 16 instances and offices are moving in four. Discriminatory housing practices in ASCS will be eliminated by September 1965.

Farmers Home Administration

Finding 1

"The assistance rendered to Negroes by FHA in the form of loans and technical assistance is consistently different from that furnished to whites in the same economic class: Negro borrowers receive smaller

loans, both absolutely and in relation to their net worth, than white farmers similarly situated. While carefully supervised white borrowers receive most of their funds for capital investments, including farm improvement or enlargement, Negroes in the same economic class, with drastically unequal supervision, receive loans primarily for living expenses and annual operating costs."

Finding 2

"There is reason to believe that the type of loans made and the technical assistance given to Negroes is limited by preconceptions held by county personnel of the FHA that Negroes cannot successfully change the pattern of their farming operations."

A review of agricultural credit service for operating, farm ownership and rural housing loans in the South comparing loan service during the first six months of the 1965 fiscal year and the past five months reveals the following:

	<u>July 1, 1964 to Dec. 31, 1964</u>	<u>Jan. 1, 1965 to June 1, 1965</u>
--	------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

Initial operating loans to
Negroes that included funds
for purchase of livestock,
machinery, and real estate
improvement

Number of loans to Negroes	304	1344
Percent of total	11%	25%

Farm Ownership Loans

Number of loans to Negroes	202	334
Percent of total	8%	14%

Initial Housing Loans

Number of loans to Negroes	505	707
Percent of total	11%	15%

All field offices now have policies which assure that planning and supervision of loans are based solely on the borrower's need and that race is not a consideration in determining either the purpose or the type of loan made. Enforcement of these and

other policies implementing equal opportunity will be scrutinized in monthly compliance reviews of county offices. The compliance reviews begin in July.

Finding 3

"A segregated service is maintained for those few Negroes employed by FHA in the South, confining them to work with Negroes, limiting their promotional opportunities, and housing them in offices separate from their white coworkers."

FHA has made its new policy of service to all without regard to the race of the client or to the race of the employee clear to all its employees.

FHA has instructed all State directors to make certain that the promotion of all personnel is on a merit basis without regard to race. As a result of these instructions one Negro employee in each of three States -- Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas -- has been promoted from GS-9 to GS-11.

FHA has eliminated all instances of separate staff housing. Since March segregated facilities have been eliminated in 95 buildings housing FHA offices. Two other offices are moving. In the remaining 16 instances where segregated facilities exist negotiations are continuing.

Finding 4

"Negroes, with few exceptions, are not appointed as full members to county committees but are confined to a newly created category of special alternate membership."

Thirteen southern States have been instructed to appoint Negroes as regular members of their county committees where 20 percent or more of the farmers are Negro. In many cases the Negro alternates will be appointed to full committee membership. On July 1, 1965, when one-third of the three-year appointments expire, 386 Negroes will be appointed regular members of these committees.

Other Actions

FHA's intensified efforts to recruit Negro personnel resulted in an increase from 121 Negro employees on January 1, 1965, to

184 on May 31, 1965. In this period employment of Negroes in the South increased from 46 to 96. From January 1 through April 30, 1965, FHA employed 32 assistant county supervisors, 18 of whom are Negroes.

Federal Extension Service

The FES report of State progress and projected action is primarily based on a questionnaire completed by the 15 States that were not in total compliance with the requirements of the Civil Rights Act. Where non-compliance exists, it will be corrected by December 31, 1965.

Finding 1

"The Federally-assisted State Extension Services of the South are administered through a separate structure and generally on a discriminatory basis, often with separate and inferior offices for Negro staff."

Separate lines of administrative supervision and staff communication which exist in three States will be eliminated by July 1, 1965. The Secretary directed FES to assure nondiscriminatory employment and utilization of cooperative Extension staff.

Of the 411 counties in the 15 southern States which have Negro agents, 82 county offices house the Negro and white agents in contiguous space by program or functional assignment without regard to race. Commitments have been made by 185 counties to consolidate white and Negro offices. The county offices in the remaining 144 counties are still negotiating.

Finding 2

"With rare exceptions, at the county level, separate plans of work are usually made for services to Negroes in those counties where Negroes are employed as Extension Service personnel, and Negro and white staff do not plan Extension programs or meet together."

Separate plans of work and annual reports for white and Negro clientele have been eliminated in all States.

All States except one are now holding integrated staff conferences. Corrective action in the remaining State will become effective July 1, 1965.

No separate plans of work will be made for 1966. Some counties in nine States still have separate planning committees for white and Negro clientele. These committees will merge before this fall when 1966 plans are made.

All States report that all county staff members assist in overall program evaluation.

Finding 3

"Responsibility for work with Negro rural residents, in counties where Negro staff are employed, is assigned almost without exception to the Negro staff and the caseloads of Negro workers are so high as not to permit adequate service."

Compliance reviews to be conducted within the next 90 days will give particular attention to the extent to which white staff members serve negro clientele in all counties regardless of whether counties have Negro staff members. Findings of these reviews will be used by the Administrator as a basis for obtaining corrective action when the need is indicated.

Finding 4

"Negro Extension agents are denied access to training furnished their white coworkers and are confined largely to inferior training, except in North Carolina."

All States except one reported staff training is integrated at all levels. Corrective action in the other State will be completed by July 1, 1965.

Selection for training is now without regard to race in all States. FES is providing assistance for training programs designed to compensate for past inadequate training.

All States reported that training facilities were open to all and that financial assistance, expense allowances, travel policies, and official time were granted on a nondiscriminatory basis.

Finding 5

"Many thousands of Negro youth are not served by Extension Services in counties where white youth are served, denied access to national programs

of the Extension Services through 4-H Clubs, and are denied the opportunity to compete with white youth for National and State awards of the 4-H program."

The responses to the questions below indicate progress in extending opportunity to Negro youth in the 15 States.

Is equal opportunity provided for all 4-H members to participate on an integrated basis in:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. National 4-H Club Conferences	14	1
b. All national contests	13	2
c. All educational fellowship grants	12	3
d. National 4-H Congress	13	2
e. State 4-H Camps	10	5
f. District 4-H Camps	12	3
g. County 4-H Camps	9	6

Are the following participated in on an equal basis?

a. Livestock sales	12	3
b. Demonstrations	15	0
c. Field days	14	1
d. Fairs	10	5
e. Awards	12	3
f. Contests	11	4
g. Scholarships	12	3
h. Tours and trips	10	5
i. Short courses	12	3

Fourteen States reported that a bi-racial committee judges records without regard to race in selection of 4-H members for awards or participation in special events.

The 1965 National 4-H Club Conference included 19 non-white delegates.

Finding 6

"Many thousands of rural Negro homemakers receive less service than white homemakers in their counties, and in counties without Negro staff additional thousands are provided no service at all."

During compliance reviews to be conducted within the next 90 days, a member of the FES home economics staff will give particular attention to the extent to which white

county home economics agents serve Negro clientele. Any examples of unequal treatment will be used by the Administrator in requiring State Extension Directors to effect corrective action.

Finding 7

"Many thousands of Negro farmers are denied access to services provided to white farmers which would help them to diversify, increase production, achieve adequate farming operations or train for off-farm employment."

Finding 8

"No review or evaluation is conducted by the Federal Extension Service to ascertain the extent to which Negroes participate in Extension Service programs."

A second compliance review in 90 days will examine the extent and nature of educational services provided to Negroes.

An FES task force has been established to work with States to develop criteria for evaluating the quality and quantity of services to low income farmers.

FES is also establishing a National Task Force to identify the problems and needs of low income farmers with the objective of raising the income level of all farmers, particularly minority group farmers.

Further, FES is establishing a supplemental statistical reporting system to obtain data on program services in all States.

Soil Conservation Service

Finding 1

"Negroes in southern counties generally receive less service from SCS than whites, except in those counties where Negroes are employed as professionals."

To determine the extent of service to minority groups, the SCS devised and sent to the field a modification of its reporting system. The first report from this revised system will be available in mid-August of this year.

New policy instructions to increase minority group participation in SCS programs and to assure that they receive the same service as other clientele have gone to all field offices. This policy change will be scrupulously observed and will be reviewed to insure its effectiveness.

Finding 2

"Few Negroes are employed as soil conservationists in the South; among those who are so employed, some are housed in segregated offices and restricted in promotional opportunities."

SCS has reduced its staff housing in buildings with discriminatory facilities from 102 to 24. Negotiations are in process on 20; four are moving.

The Service-wide Career Program, including training, assignment and promotion, is based on merit and ability without regard to race or color.

Two research projects on promotion of Negro professionals in SCS disclosed (1) of the 18 Negro professional employees in SCS in the South, two reached Grade 11 or better more rapidly than the average; and (2) while the average time for soil scientists with Masters' degrees to reach GS-11 in SCS is $12\frac{1}{2}$ years, the three Negro soil scientists reaching that grade did so in $6\frac{1}{2}$ to $8\frac{1}{2}$ years.

As part of its serious effort to recruit Negro professionals, SCS is making progress in assisting Negro colleges to upgrade their agricultural and engineering curricula.

During fiscal year 1964 when SCS total employment decreased 1.2%, employment of Negroes in SCS increased 55%. Employment of Negro professional employees in the South increased 30% from June 30, 1964, through January 1, 1965. On January 1, 1965, SCS had 144 Negro employees. On April 30 there were 221 Negro employees, and by July 1 the Service expects to have close to 300 Negro employees. The new accessions range from GS-2 to GS-11. Half of the approximate 150 increase projected over the January to June period will be professional.

Finding 3

"Where Negro professionals are employed by the SCS in the South, they are generally confined to work with Negro landowners, and Negro landowners in these counties are restricted to receiving the services of Negro staff."

The new policy states, "Land owners and operators from minority groups are not to be restricted to working with SCS personnel who may themselves be members of minority groups," and "SCS personnel who are members of minority groups are not to be restricted by the Service to working solely with minority group land owners and operators." This policy will be enforced and periodically reviewed to determine its effectiveness.

Finding 4

"Negro professionals in the South do not participate in the deliberations of the boards of supervisors through which SCS services are channelled."

SCS minority group employees are to meet with district governing bodies in their regular meetings to report on progress or discuss problems likely to be of interest to the governing body.

Finding 5

"The SCS takes no responsibility for assuring participation by Negro landowners in conservation district elections for boards of supervisors; in southern counties where such boards are appointed, the SCS has not recommended Negroes for appointment. No Negro has been elected to a board of supervisors in the South."

SCS will encourage minority group land owners and operators to participate in the next elections of soil conservation district supervisors or directors. SCS will make a point of recommending to State officials the names of minority group leaders in soil conservation work as candidates for appointment to district governing bodies and will encourage minority group rural residents to become candidates for election to district boards.

Finding 6

"No reviews or evaluations are conducted by the SCS to ascertain the extent to which Negroes participate in SCS programs."

As noted above, SCS has adjusted its reporting system to determine the extent to which Negroes participate in SCS programs. The first report should be available in mid-August. This will make it possible for SCS to review and evaluate the actions it is taking to encourage minority group participation.

